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ABSTRACT

The Hispanic American elderly represent an ever growing share of America's older population. This report provides statistical information about the older Hispanic American population in the following areas: (1) demography; (2) composition; (3) geographical distribution; (4) population projections; (5) income; (6) poverty, including poverty among Hispanic subgroups; (7) employment; (8) unemployment rate; (9) labor force participation rates; (10) health; (11) housing; (12) education; (13) participation in Older Americans Act programs; and (14) ratio of Hispanic elderly to total Hispanic population. The usual difficulties that older Americans face are compounded for Hispanics because of the economic, cultural, and language barriers they have faced throughout their entire lives. Poor education and low technology skills have lead to lives of near poverty and vulnerable health status. Although Hispanic elders have established needs, their participation rates in service programs are declining. Data are presented in 21 tables. Appendices provide the following additional demographic information: (1) total United States population, 1980; (2) Spanish origin population, 1980; (3) Spanish origin population, 1970-80; (4) persons of Spanish origin in the United States, 1980; (5) median age of Spanish origin, Black, and White population, 1980; and (6) population projections, 1900-2020. (BJV)

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DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLDER HISPANIC POPULATION

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A REPORT

BY THE

CHAIRMAN

OF THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDREDTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

DECEMBER 1988

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FOREWORD

As the number of older Americans continues to climb, reliable information about their needs remains elusive. Hearings before this Committee have clearly pointed to the fact that there is a strong need for the collection and analysis of social, economic and health data on older persons in this Nation, particularly of subpopulations of the elderly. Planners and policy makers rely on statistical data to define the needs of this population. However, when such data do not exist, there is the frequent assumption that there are no problems or needs in the aged community. Yet anecdotal data suggests the opposite.

What follows is more than a dry set of facts. It is an updated profile of a dynamic and diverse population of older persons: the Hispanic elderly. The Hispanic elderly represent an ever growing share of our Nation's older population. Society is enriched by the cultural heritage, hard work, values, and other contributions they bring to our society.

Nevertheless, Hispanic elders have needs. Last year more older Hispanics were poor than at any other time since the Bureau of the Census first tabulated statistics for this group. The percentage of Hispanic elders in poverty in 1987 was about the same as it was in 1976. Clearly, this report raises many questions. For instance, how will we—policymakers, service planners and providers, families and caregivers—meet the needs of the older Hispanics and help them to help themselves? How do we continue to respond to the needs of the growing population of all older Americans? The data in this report do indeed have far-reaching implications for our Nation's aging policy, as well as for policies which affect all of this Nation's citizens.

It is in this spirit that we applaud Carmela G. Lacayo, President and Chief Executive Officer, and the entire staff of the Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores for compiling this timely report on Hispanic elders. The Asociacion's commitment to working on behalf of Hispanics young and old is well recognized. The Select Committee on Aging is pleased to collaborate with the Asociacion and others in designing ways to prevent the burdens of poor and minority older persons.

Let us move toward the day when the often sad facts in this report will be replaced by a new profile of older Hispanics living the dignified, comfortable old age that by rights should belong to every older American.

EDWARD R. ROYBAL,
Chairman.

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DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE OLDER HISPANIC POPULATION

Numbers and Projections

Nearly 1 million Hispanics 65 years of age or older lived in the United States in 1987, the U.S. Census Bureau estimates. This figure may understate the actual number because a significant proportion of the Hispanic population is missed in Census Bureau counts. Aged Hispanics accounted for 3.3 percent of the entire U.S. 65-plus population in 1987.

Nearly three out of every five older Hispanics are women (57.9 percent). A similar ratio exists for other major aged population groups, but it is slightly lower for elderly Hispanics. For example, women account for 59.4 percent of the entire White aged population.

Table 1.—Estimated Resident Population Aged 65 Years or Older in the United States in 1987 (Figures in Thousands)

	Both Sexes		Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Hispanic	972	100	409	42.1	563	57.9
White	26,865	100	10,905	40.6	15,960	59.4
Black	2,448	100	2,484	40.2	1,465	59.8
Total	29,835	100	12,119	40.6	17,716	59.4

Note: Figures do not add because Hispanics are included in both the Black and the White aged population.

Sources:
(1) "Projections of the Population of the United States by Age, Sex, and Race: 1983 to 2080", Series P-25, No. 952, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1984.
(2)"United States Population Estimates by Age, Sex, and Race: 1980 to 1987", Series P-25, No. 1022, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March 1988.
(3)"Projections of the Hispanic Population: 1983 to 2080", Series P-25, No. 995, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November 1986.

COMPOSITION

The Hispanic aged population is composed of five major subgroups: Mexican-Americans, Cubans, Puerto Ricans, Central and South Americans, and persons of other Hispanic origins. Elderly Mexican-Americans account for more than one-half (54.2 percent) of all Hispanics 65 years of age or older living in the United States. Cubans are the next single largest aged Hispanic subgroup, followed by elderly Puerto Ricans. However, the entire "other older Hispanic origin" population is actually larger than the total number of aged Cubans or elderly Puerto Ricans.

Table 2.—Hispanic Persons 65 Years of Age or Older in the United States by Subgroup in 1987
(Figures in Thousands)

Hispanic Subgroups	Number	Percent of Total Hispanic Aged Population
Mexican-Americans	491	54.2
Cubans	123	13.6
Puerto Ricans	81	8.9
Central & South Americans	59	6.5
Other Hispanic Origins	152	16.8
Total	906	100.0

NOTE: Figures may not add because of rounding.

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

The percentage of females in the major Hispanic aged subgroups ranges from 53.2 percent for "other" elderly Hispanic origin populations to 64.1 for older Puerto Ricans. The following table illustrates the male-female composition of Hispanic elderly subgroups.

Table 3.—Hispanic Elderly Subgroup Population by Sex in 1987 (Figures in Thousands) [1]

Hispanic Subgroups	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Mexican-Americans	213	43.3	278	56.6
Cubans	53	43.0	70	56.9
Puerto Ricans	29	35.8	52	64.1
Central & South Americans	23	38.9	36	61.0
Other Hispanic Origins	70	46.4	81	53.6

[1]The estimated total figure for the table on page 1 is based on the resident population of elderly Hispanics in the U.S. The unpublished numbers, which appear in the tables on pages 2 and 3, are based on the civilian noninstitutionalized population.

NOTE: Figures may not add because of rounding.

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION

In 1980, about six out of every seven (86.6 percent) elderly Hispanics lived in 10 States: California, Texas, Florida, New York, New Mexico, New Jersey, Arizona, Illinois, Colorado, and Pennsylvania. Approximately seven out of ten (70.9 percent) elderly Hispanics resided in California, Texas, Florida, and New York. According to the Census Bureau, 708,880 Hispanics in the United States were 65 years of age or older in 1980.

Table 4.—Hispanic Aged Population in Top Ten States in 1980

State	Number	Percent of Total Hispanic Aged
California	179,507	25.3
Texas	150,349	21.2
Florida	95,596	13.5
New York	76,962	10.9

Table 4.—Hispanic Aged Population in Top Ten States in 1980—Continued

State	Number	Percent of Total Hispanic Aged
New Mexico	30,086	4.2
New Jersey	20,599	2.9
Arizona	19,797	2.8
Illinois	16,973	2.4
Colorado	16,181	2.3
Pennsylvania	7,514	1.1

Source: "General Population Characteristics United States Summary 1980 Census Population", Series PC 80-1-B1, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, May 1983.

In 1987, four States had 100,000 or more Hispanics 65 years of age or older.

Table 5.—States With More Than 100,000 Hispanics 65 Years of Age or Older in 1987

State	Number
California	248,000
Texas	214,000
New York	111,000
Florida	110,000

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The Census Bureau projects that the rate of growth among older Hispanics will be 4.5 times as great as the entire aged population from 1987 to the year 2000: 76.9 percent vs. 17.0 percent. The growth percentage for elderly Hispanics is expected to be nearly five times as great as the rate of increase for the entire White aged population during same period: 76.9 percent vs. 15.9 percent.

Table 6.—Projected Increase in Population 65 Years of Age or Older (Figures in Thousands)

	1987	2000	2015	2040
Hispanics	972	1,719	3,082	6,744
Percent Increase from 1987		76.9	217.1	593.8
Whites	26,865	31,127	38,990	55,436
Percent Increase from 1987		15.9	45.1	106.4
Blacks	2,448	2,975	4,205	8,369
Percent Increase from 1987		21.5	71.8	241.9
All Races	29,835	34,921	44,797	66,988
Percent Increase from 1987		17.0	50.1	124.1

Sources: "United States Population Estimated by Age, Sex, and Race: 1980 to 1987", Series P-25, No. 1022, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March 1988.
"Projections of the Hispanic Population: 1983 to 2080", Series P-25, No. 995, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, November 1986.

INCOME

Social Security provided more than one-half (50.9 percent) of the total income for aged Hispanics in 1986. Earnings ranked second (14.3 percent of total income), followed by interest income (11.6 percent).

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) accounts for 6.' percent of the Hispanic elderly's total support. This is more than 10 times the amount of the entire White aged population: 6.4. percent vs. 0.6 percent.

Social Security and SSI represent almost three out of every five dollars (57.3 percent of total support) received by older Hispanics, in comparison to two out of every five dollars (40.1 percent of total support) for aged Whites.

Table 7.—Percent of Aggregate Income for Persons Aged 65 Years or Older in 1986

Income Category	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Social Security	40.4	39.5	56.6	50.9
Income from Property	25.9	26.9	8.3	15.0
Interest Income	(18.5)	(19.2)	(6.6)	(11.6)
Dividend Income	(7.4)	(7.7)	(1.7)	(3.4)
Retirement Income	16.2	16.3	14.4	10.8
Earnings	14.8	14.9	12.4	14.3
Veterans' Compensation, & Unemployment Compensation	1.2	1.2	2.4	1.6
Supplemental Security Income	0.9	0.6	5.3	6.4
Public Assistance	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.8
Other	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.1

NOTE: Figures may not total because of rounding.

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Older Hispanics are less likely to receive Social Security and are substantially more likely to collect SSI than the general aged population. In 1986, only 81.0 percent of all Hispanics 65 years of age or older received Social Security, compared to 92.5 percent for elderly Whites and 91.7 for the entire aged population. However, older Hispanics were nearly five times as likely as elderly Whites (20.2. percent vs. 4.3 percent) and almost four times as likely as the total aged population (20.2 percent vs. 5.7 percent) to collect SSI.

Only one out of every six (16.1 percent) Hispanics age 65 and above receives retirement income from a pension or annuity, in contrast to one of every three elderly Whites (32.5 percent). Older Whites are also twice as likely to receive interest income as elderly Hispanics (69.8 percent vs. 31.2 percent) and nearly three times as likely to receive income from dividends, rents or an estate (25.8 percent vs. 9.8 percent).

Table 8.—Percentage of Persons 65 Years of Age or Older Receiving Various Types of Income in 1986

Income Category	All Races	White	Black	Hispanc
Social Security	91.7	92.5	88.2	81.0
Interest Income	65.8	69.8	27.0	31.2

Table 8.—Percentage of Persons 65 Years of Age or Older Receiving Various Types of Income in 1986—Continued

Income Category	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Retirement Income (Private Pensions or Annuities & Military, Federal or State Retirement Income)	31.3	32.5	20.5	16.1
Dividends, Rents & Estates	24.1	25.8	7.2	9.8
Earnings	14.7	14.9	12.5	11.9
VA Benefits & Workers' Compensation	4.7	4.7	5.7	5.3
SSI	5.7	4.3	19.0	20.2
Public Assistance	0.5	0.4	1.2	2.2

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

In 1986, 48.5 percent of all Hispanics 65 years or older had annual incomes below $5,000—more than double the rate for elderly Whites (24.0 percent). Four out of every five aged (80.2 percent) Hispanics had incomes under $10,000. Nine out of every ten (90.5 percent) elderly Hispanic women had incomes below $10,000.

Aged Hispanics had a median annual income in 1986 representing 64.5 percent of the median annual income for elderly Whites: $5,510 vs. $8,544. The rate was 60.7 percent for older Hispanic men ($7,369 vs. $12,131) and 68.0 percent for aged Hispanic women ($4,583 vs. $6,738).

Table 9.—Percentage of Persons 65 Years of Age or Older With Annual Incomes Below Certain Levels in 1986

Under $5,000	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Hispanic	48.5	29.9	62.5
White	24.0	10.4	33.5
Black	50.5	31.6	63.3

Under $10,000	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Hispanic	80.2	66.8	90.5
White	57.3	40.6	70.0
Black	83.3	74.9	89.6

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Table 10.—Median Annual Income for Persons 65 years of Age or Older in 1986

Race or Hispanic Origin	Both Sexes	Males	Females
Hispanic	$5,510	$ 7,369	$4,583
White	8,544	12,131	6,738
Black	5,030	6,757	4,508

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

POVERTY

Aged Hispanics have one of the highest poverty rates among older Americans. In 1987, 27.45 percent of all Hispanics 65 years of age or older were poor. This is a sizable increase from the 22.5 percent poverty rate in 1986. Not only that—it is the highest poverty rate among Hispanic elderly since 1980, when the rate was 30.8 percent. Indeed, older Hispanics today are just as poor as they were in 1976. They are more than two-and-a-half times as likely to be poor as elderly Whites (27.4 percent vs. 10.1 percent). Poverty among older Whites declined from 10.7 percent to 10.1 percent between 1986 and 1987.

Individuals 65 years of age or older were classified as poor in 1986 if their annual income was below $5,225 ($6,630 for an elderly couple), according to the Census Bureau definition. This translates to just $100 per week (nearly $128 per week for an aged couple) to pay for housing, food, medical care, transportation, clothing, and other everyday necessities.

Table 11.—Poverty Status Among Persons 65 Years of Age or Older in 1987 (Figures in Thousands)

	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Men				
Total Number	11,837	10,650	959	398
Poor	1,002	729	236	93
Percent Poor	8.5%	6.8%	24.6%	23.4%
Women				
Total Number	16,691	14,990	1,424	505
Poor	2,489	1,868	572	154
Percent Poor	14.9%	12.5%	40.2%	30.5%
Both Sexes				
Total Number	8,527	25,639	2,383	903
Poor	3,491	2,597	808	247
Percent Poor	2.2%	10.1%	33.9%	27.4%

NOTE: Figures do not add because Hispanics are included in both the Black and White aged population.

Source: *Current Population Reports*, "Money Income and Poverty Status of Families and Persons in the United States: 1987 (Advance Data From the March 1988 Current Population Survey)," Series P-60, No. 161, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, August 1988.

Poverty is especially widespread among unrelated older Hispanics (persons living alone or with nonrelatives). In 1986, one-half (50.1 percent) of all unrelated Hispanics 65 years or older lived in poverty, including 55.3 percent of all unrelated elderly Hispanic women.

Table 12.—Poverty Status Among Unrelated Individuals 65 Years of Age or Older in 1986 (Figures in Thousands)

	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Men				
Total Number	2,098	1,819	244	63
Poor	978	304	97	24

Table 12.—Poverty Status Among Unrelated Individuals 65 Years of Age or Older in 1986 (Figures in Thousands)—Continued

	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Percent Poor	19.6%	16.7%	39.8%	37.2%
Women				
Total Number	7,086	6,439	589	158
Poor	1,899	1,523	352	87
Percent Poor	26.8%	23.7%	59.7%	55.3%
Both Sexes				
Total Number	9,184	8,259	833	221
Poor	2,311	1,827	449	111
Percent Poor	25.2%	22.9%	53.9%	50.1%

NOTE: Figures do not add because Hispanics are included in both the Black and White aged population.

Source: *Current Population Reports*, "Poverty in the United States 1986," Series P-60, No. 160, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, June 1988.

A large number of older Hispanics are also teetering on the edge of poverty. In 1987, 118,000 Hispanics 65 years or older had incomes within 25 percent of the poverty threshold. These individuals are often called the "marginally poor." The net impact is that 365,000 older Hispanics—two out of every five (40.4 percent) Hispanics 65 years of age or older—either lived in poverty (27.4 percent) or so close to it (13.0 percent were marginally poor) in 1987 that they really could not appreciate the difference.

Table 13.—Persons 65 Years of Age or Older With Incomes Below Poverty Level and Below 125 Percent of Poverty Level in 1987 (Figures in Thousands)

	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Total Number Below Poverty Level	28,527	25,639	2,383	903
Below 125% of Poverty	5,779	4,557	1,094	365
Percent Below 125% of Poverty	20.3%	17.8%	45.9%	40.4%

NOTE: Figures do not add because Hispanics are included in both the Black and White aged population.

Source: *Current Population Reports*, "Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1987 (Advance Data From the March 1988 Current Population Survey)," Series P-60, No. 161, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, August 1988.

POVERTY AMONG HISPANIC SUBGROUPS

Older Puerto Ricans had the highest poverty rate (39.9 percent) among the poverty data for three older Hispanic subgroups: Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, and other Hispanic origins (Cuban, Central and South Americans, and other Hispanic origins).

The elderly Puerto Rican poverty rate is even higher than that for older Blacks: 39.9 percent vs. 31.0 percent.

Table 14.—Poverty Status Among Hispanics 65 Years of Age or Older by Major Hispanic Subgroups in 1986 (Figures in Thousands)

Hispanic Subgroup	Total Number	Poor	Percent Poor
Mexican-Americans	491	103	21.1
Puerto Ricans	81	32	39.9
Other Hispanic Origins	334	68	20.4

Source: *Current Population Reports*, "Poverty in the United States 1986," Series P-60, No. 160, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, June 1988.

Employment

Older Hispanics who work typically have significantly lower earnings than similarly situated aged Whites. In 1987, the median weekly full-time earnings for older Hispanic wage earners amounted to $241.93, compared to $322.27 for earned 60.1 percent of the median weekly full-time earnings for aged White males, and Hispanic women 65 or older earned 90.1 percent of the median weekly full-time earnings for elderly White women. Information about employment patterns of older Hispanics continues to be limited. Comprehensive statistics on types of work performed by elderly Hispanics, for example, are not available, nor is other pertinent employment information.

Table 15.—Median Usual Weekly Earnings of a Full-Time Wager Earner Aged 65 Years or Older in 1987

Sex	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic	Percent Hispanic To White
Male	$380.32	$406.83	$263.12	$244.69	60.1
Female	257.09	258.82	216.59	223.07	90.1
Both Sexes	307.73	322.27	253.65	241.93	75.0

Source: Current Population Survey, 1987 Annual Averages (Unpublished Data), U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

Older Hispanics ordinarily have a much higher unemployment rate than elderly Whites, quite often two to three times as great. Limited education and language barriers can pose formidable problems for aged Hispanics who are looking for work. In 1987, the unemployment rate for Hispanics 65 years or older was more than twice as great as for elderly Whites: 5.2 percent vs. 2.4 pointed out that a higher margin of error exists for the aged Hispanic unemployment rate because a relatively small sample was used to compile the figure.

Additionally, it should be emphasized that the unemployment rates for all older Americans are probably artificially lower because much unemployment is undetected for aged persons. The unemployment figures, for example, do not reflect the labor force "drop-outs" (such as people who have abandoned hope of securing

employment after a prolonged and unsuccessful search) or "discouraged workers" who do not believe that they can obtain a job.

Table 16.—1987 Unemployment Rate (Annual Average) for Persons 65 years or Older

Sex	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Male	2.6%	2.5%	4.3%	7.9%
Female	2.4	2.4	3.4	3.7
Both Sexes	2.5	2.4	3.9	5.2

Source: *Unemployment and Earnings*, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 1988.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES

About 1 of every 11 Hispanics 65 years of age or older (9.1 percent) was in the labor force in 1987. This figure is slightly lower than for the total 65-plus population (11.1 percent), elderly Whites (11.1 percent), and aged Blacks (10.7 percent).

Table 17.—Percent of Persons 65 Years of Age or Older in the Civilian Labor Force in 1987

Sex	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Males	16.3	16.5	13.7	14.4
Females	7.4	7.2	8.6	5.3
Both Sexes	11.1	11.1	10.7	9.1

Source: *Unemployment and Earnings*, U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, January 1988.

HEALTH

Aged Hispanics generally have a more negative perception of their health than aged Whites. In 1986, 41.2 percent of all Hispanics age 65 or older considered their health to be poor or just fair, compared to 28.5 percent for elderly Whites.

Nearly three out of five (58.7 percent) elderly Hispanics say that health is either good, very good, or excellent. This compares to 71.5 percent for aged Whites and 55.6 percent for older Blacks.

Table 18.—Perception of Health Among Persons 65 Years of Age or Older in 1986

Characterization	All Races	White	Black	Hispanic
Excellent	16.4%	16.7%	11.0%	15.5%
Very Good	20.8	21.3	16.6	14.5
Good	32.9	33.5	28.0	28.7
Fair	20.1	19.3	28.1	26.5
Poor	9.8	9.2	16.4	14.7

NOTE: Figures may not total because of rounding.

Source: "Current Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, United States, 1986," Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, October 1988.

Another measure of the generally lower quality of health among older Hispanics is the higher incidence of disability days in certain key indices. For example, 31.5 percent of aged Hispanics were bedridden for 1 to 30 days during 1986, compared to 21.9 percent for elderly Whites and 26.9 percent for older Blacks.[1]

Moreover, elderly Hispanics had, on the average, 37.0 restricted activity days in 1986, 6 days more than aged Whites (31.0 restricted activity days) but 6.4 days less than older Blacks (43.4 days).[1]

Yet, the average number of doctor visits for aged Hispanics (8.0 per year) in 1986 was less than that for older Whites (9.1) and elderly Blacks (9.0).[1]

Housing

Another measure of the quality of life for older Americans is their housing. Once again, the living arrangements in many fundamental areas for aged Hispanics are deficient when compared to other elderly groups. Older Hispanics are also significantly less likely to own their homes in comparison with the total aged population: 55.8 percent vs. 73.5 percent in 1983. Home ownership among elderly Hispanics is also below the rate for older Blacks (61.1 percent). Additional current data comparing home ownership among older Hispanics is not available.

Table 19.—Owner-Occupied and Renter-Occupied Units for Households With a Head Aged 65 years or Older in 1985 (Figures in Thousands)

	All Races	Black	Hispanic
Total Households	17,775	1,524	453
Number Owner-Occupied	13,067	931	253
Percent Owner-Occupied	73.5%	61.1%	55.8%
Number Renter-Occupied	4,708	593	200
Percent Renter-Occupied	26.5%	38.9%	44.2%

Source: "Annual Housing Survey: 1983," Current Housing Reports, Series H-150-83, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census and Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Policy Development and Research, October 1983.

Education

Elderly Hispanics are among the most educationally disadvantaged groups in our society by whatever barometer one uses. In 1987, 30.9 percent of all Hispanic men 65 years or older and 31.5 percent of all aged Hispanic women were functionally illiterate—they had less than 5 years of schooling. This rate is six to seven times as great as for older Whites (5.0 percent for elderly White men and 4.3 percent for aged White women).

More than one-half of all older Hispanics have completed only 7 years of schooling or less (52.5 percent for aged Hispanic males and 56.4 percent for elderly Hispanic females). This rate is three to four

[1]Unpublished data from the National Health Interview Survey, 1986, Dept. of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics.

times as great as for aged Whites (15.1 percent for older White men and 13.5 percent for elderly White women).

The median level of schooling for an older Hispanic male is just 62.8 percent of that for an elderly White male: 7.6 years vs. 12.1 years in 1987. For aged Hispanic women, the median level of schooling is 60.3 percent of the amount for elderly White women: 7.3 years vs. 12.1 years.

Table 20.—Years of Schooling Completed for Persons 65 Years of Age or Older in 1987

Years of Schooling	White		Black		Hispanic	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Less than 5	5.0%	4.3%	24.8%	16.2%	30.9%	31.5%
5–7	10.1	9.2	27.1	23.2	21.6	24.9
8	16.3	16.0	14.3	12.9	14.7	14.5
9–11	15.0	16.6	13.7	19.9	12.4	7.9
12	28.9	34.7	13.4	16.9	11.1	15.1
College 1–3	11.2	11.1	2.6	4.8	4.4	3.3
College 4 or more	13.5	8.1	4.3	6.1	4.9	2.7
Median Level of schooling (years)	12.1	12.1	7.8	8.8	7.6	7.3
Percent Graduating from high school	53.6	53.9	20.2	27.8	20.4	21.0

NOTE: Figures may not total because of rounding.

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

Perhaps the most educationally deprived group in our society today is the elderly Mexican-American. Nearly one-half (47.2 percent) of all Mexican-Americans aged 65 years or older had less than 5 years of schooling in 1985. Two out of every three (68.1 percent) had not completed eighth grade. The median level of schooling completed for older Mexican-Americans was 5.4 years. This is barely above the demarcation line for being functionally illiterate (having less than 5 years of schooling). In 1985 only 11.2 percent of all Mexican-Americans 65 or older had been graduated from high school.[2]

PARTICIPATION IN OLDER AMERICANS ACT PROGRAMS

The elderly Hispanic participation rate for the Title V Senior Community SEP (SCSEP) is about twice as great as it is for the Title III Supportive and Nutrition Services Programs. Title V is available for unemployed, low-income individuals 55 years or older. Older Hispanics accounted for 8.1 percent of all enrollees in the SCSEP during the 1986-87 program year.[3]

Title III provides supportive services and meals to persons 60 years or older. Aged Hispanics represented just 3.4 percent of all persons receiving supportive services under Title III-B during Fiscal Year 1987. They accounted for 4.2 percent of those participating in the Congregate Meals Program (Title III-C-Part 1) and 3.3 percent to those receiving home-delivered meals (Title III-C-Part 2).[4]

[2]Current Population Reports, "The Hispanic Population in the United States: March 1985," U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, March 1988.
[3]U.S. Dept. of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, Division of Older Workers.
[4]U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services, Administration on Aging.

The number of older Hispanics participating in the Title III-B Supportive Services Program has dropped by nearly 151,000 during the past 7 years from 444,804 in Fiscal Year 1980 to 293,924 in 1987. Aged Hispanic participation in the Nutrition Program for the Elderly, though, has grown from 121,436 in Fiscal Year 1980 to 142,325 during 1987.

Ratio of the Hispanic Elderly to the Total Hispanic Population

Hispanics are a much younger population than most other ethnic groups in the United States. Persons 65 or older represented just 4.9 percent of the total Hispanic population in 1987, in contrast to 11.7 percent for the total U.S. population. The elderly constitute less than 5 percent of each Hispanic subgroup, except for Cubans and those classified as "other Hispanic origins." These data tend to obscure the equally important fact that the older Hispanic population is booming.

The Cuban population is much older than other Hispanic subgroups. About one out of every eight (12.1 percent in 1987) Cubans is 65 years of age or older.

Table 21.—Percentage of Population Aged 65 Years or Older in 1987 By Hispanic Subgroup

Population Group/Subgroup	Percent of Population 65 Years or Older
Total U.S.	11.7
All Hispanics	4.9
Mexican-Americans	4.2
Puerto Ricans	3.6
Cubans	12.1
Central & South Americans	2.8
Other Hispanic Origins	9.8

Source: Unpublished data from the March 1987 Current Population Survey, U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of the Census.

COMMITTEE SUMMARY

It is clear from the previous documentation that Hispanic older persons are facing difficulties not unlike the majority population. Their daily survival however, is further compounded by economics, cultural and language barriers which have confronted them throughout their entire lives. What's more, the diversity in the older Hispanic population points to the difficulties encountered by policy makers and service providers alike in addressing the needs of this Nation's aging community.

While demographic data indicate that the older Hispanic population will continue to grow, society will also continue to struggle to meet the demands made upon it by an ever-growing and ever-changing aging people. For those elders in the Latino community, these statistics demonstrate how poor education and low technology skills have led to lives of near poverty and vulnerable health status. Although Hispanic elders have established needs, service statistics reveal that their participation rates in service programs are declining. The question remains: how do we, as a Nation, intend to answer the needs of all persons in our country?

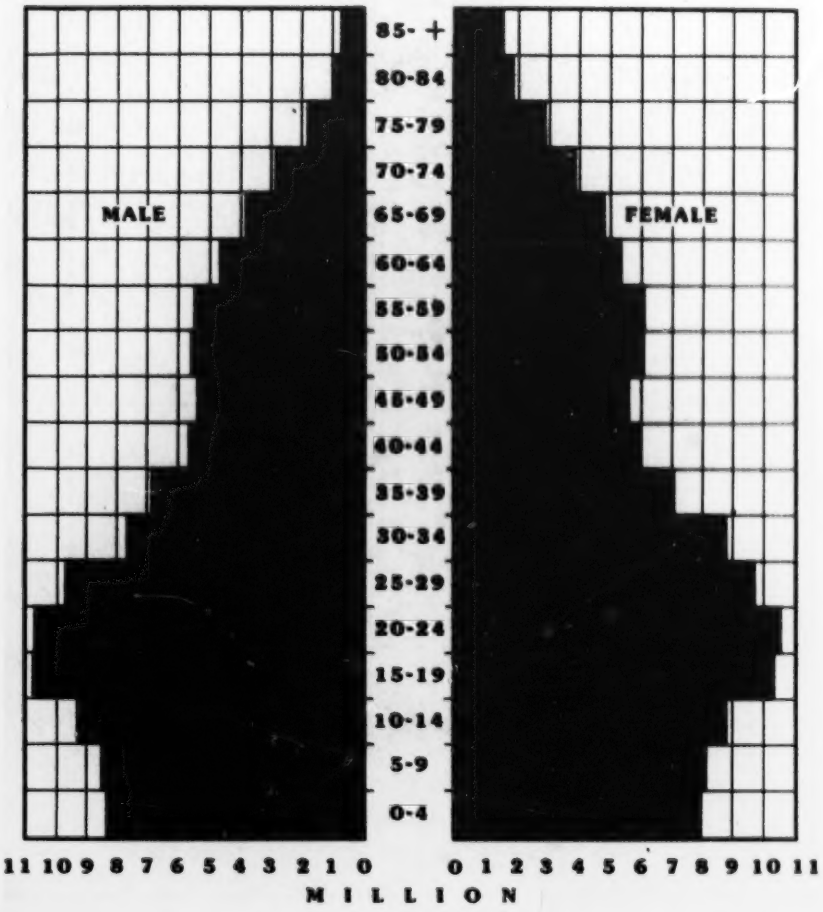
Notwithstanding the data presented in this profile, it is incumbent on planners and policy makers to remember that this profile is not whole. Unfortunately, there does not exist a database which accurately reflects the actual number of ethnic/racial minority older persons who have immigrated to the United States. Nor is it likely that the 1990 Decennial Census will be able to reliably complete this task. As important as the census is to adding to the knowledge about this Nation, it has limitations in its ability to reflect the details about the population that are necessary for planning for the future.

It is with hope that we move towards the 1991 White House Conference on Aging, secure in the knowledge that profiles such as these will be of benefit to everyone involved. This profile provides the most recently available demographic data on the Hispanic elderly. Let us trust that during the 1991 White House Conference, the lack of reliable statistical data on the elderly, especially older subpopulations, will be addressed in search of potential resolutions.

EDWARD R. ROYBAL, *Chairman,*
SELECT COMMITTEE ON AGING.

APPENDIX

TOTAL UNITED STATES
1980



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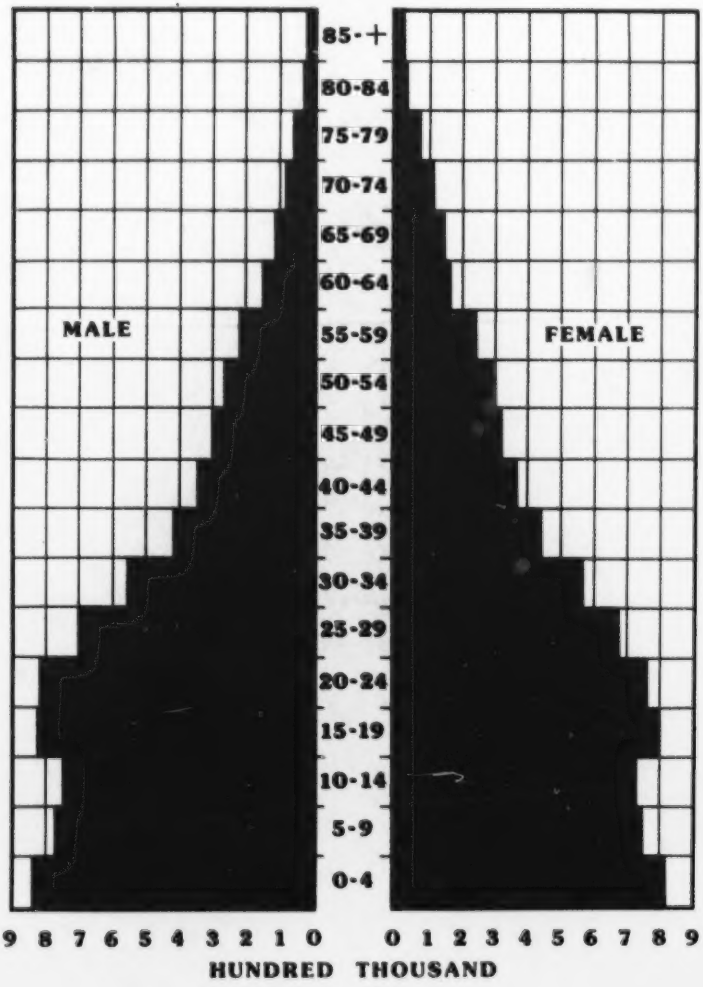
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR HISPANIC ELDERLY Los Angeles, California DECEMBER 1981

SPANISH ORIGIN
1980



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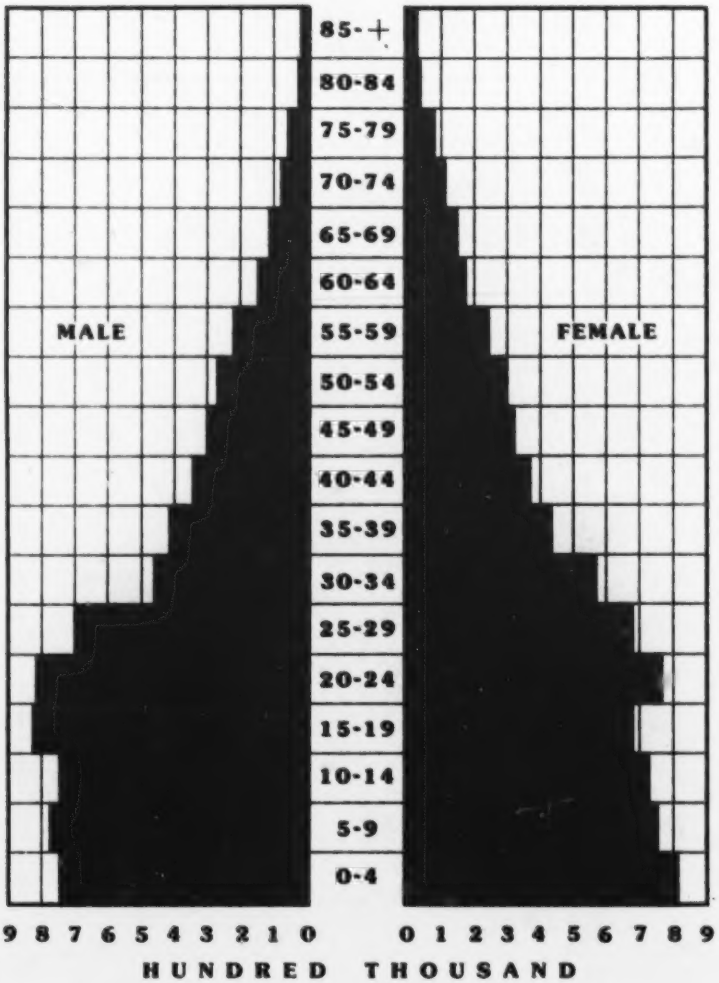
SPANISH ORIGIN
1970 - 1980



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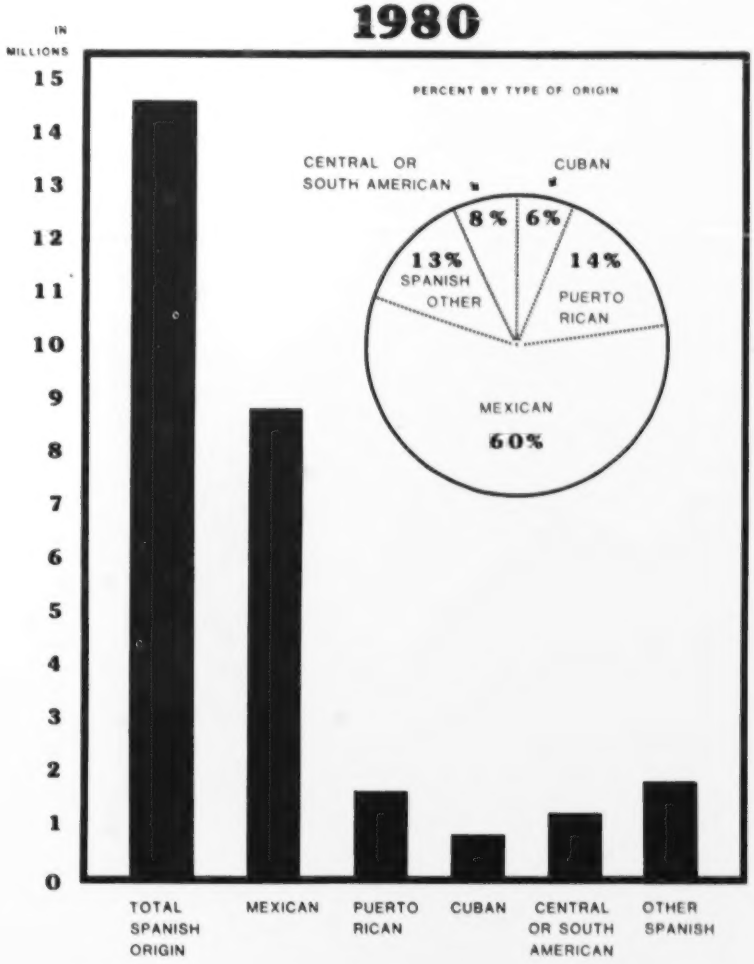
PERSONS OF SPANISH ORIGIN IN THE UNITED STATES

1980



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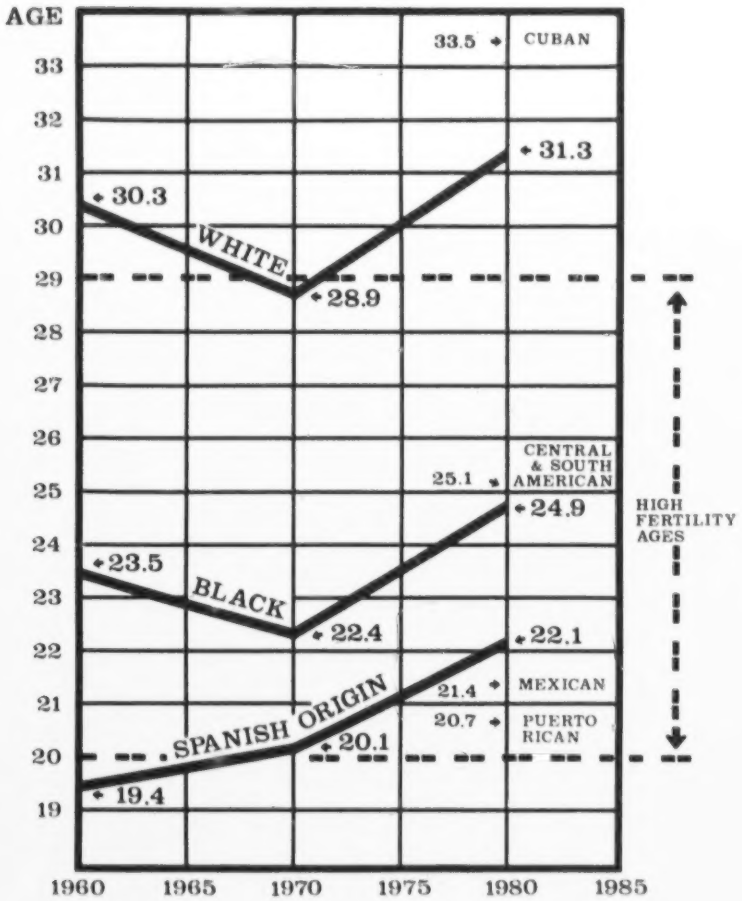
MEDIAN AGE OF SPANISH ORIGIN, BLACK AND WHITE POPULATION

1980



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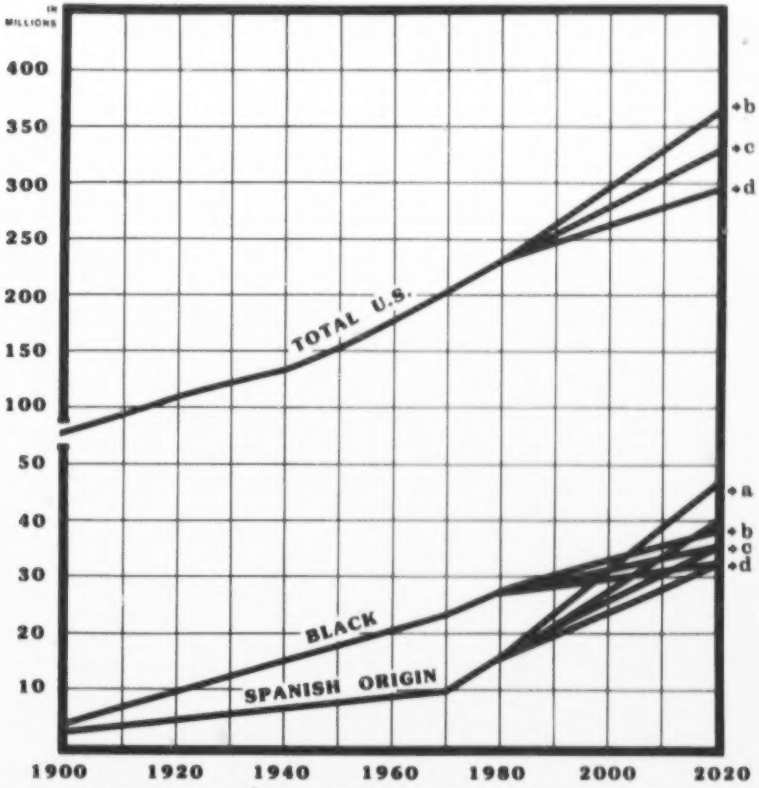
POPULATION PROJECTIONS: 1900-2020



a: PUERTO RICAN INCLUDED b: CONTINUED TREND / SLIGHT INCREASE IN FERTILITY, CONTINUED IMMIGRATION c: CONTINUED IMMIGRATION d: STABILIZING EFFECT

NOTE: Crossover between Spanish Origin and Black population projections will occur between 2005 and 2015

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